(c) if so, the facts thereof; and

(d) whether his Ministry has taken any further steps to check retrenchment of workers, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) to (d) Yes Sir. According to the provisional information available with the Labour Bureau, in the past few years, the Number of workers retrenched has increased from 2503 in 1999 to 3651 in 2001. However, the number of establishements resorting to retrenchement has declined from 176 to 132 over the same period. Safeguards are provided under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 to regulated retrenchment of workers.

The Ministry takes every care to ensure that permission is granted for retrenchment only in genuine cases. For example, since 1999, in 50 per cent of the cases permission has not been granted where applications have been filed by the employers for retrenchment of workers.

Panel for the hire and Fire Policy

1717. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to refer to answer to Starred Question 61 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 18th July, 2002 and State:

(a) whether Government have formed a panel for checks on hire and fire in Labour Policy as reported in the 'Times of India' dated the 11th July, 2002;

(b) if so, the composition thereof; and

(c) by when this panel is likely to submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Labour Reforms

†1718. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that international investors and industry are putting pressures on Government to bring a change in the field of labour reforms which could suit their Interests;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government have adopted "Hire and Fire" policy for labour reforms and have decided 10 make sweeping changes in the provisions of Industrial Disputes Act, 1947;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether it is also a fact that industrialist would benefit more than labourers as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Review/updation of labour laws is an ongoing process in order to bring them in tune with the prevailing situation and emerging needs of the economy. Taking into consideration the requirement of productivity, competitiveness and employment generation, a need has been felt to make amendments in certain labour laws and steps initiated accordingly.

(c) and (d) The amendments proposed in the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 cannot be divulged at this stage.

(e) Amendments to various labour laws are brought about keeping in view the requirements of the social partners and after ensuring that the workers interests are fully protected.

Social security for unorganised sector

†1719. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposal to initiate social security scheme for protection of the workers of unorganized sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that 20 or more people are necessary to form an organization under the EPF or MP Act; and

(d) if so, by when Government propose to bring an amendment providing the facility of forming an organization with lesser number of workers?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.